



All photos courtesy of Stratos.

Adding value on land or at sea

A new generation of mobile satellite systems is meeting strong demand for broadband connectivity in Asia's maritime, media and first-responder markets. High-performance systems and value-added services are helping customers meet critical networking requirements while ensuring cost control and high security. Helen Jameson talks with Gerbrand Schalkwijk, the Singapore-based Vice President, Asia-Pacific for Stratos Global Corporation about how Stratos is helping IT managers take full advantage of these systems.

Question: We look forward to hearing your viewpoint on the state of the Asian mobile satellite services market. However, would you start by introducing yourself and Stratos to our readers?

Gerbrand Schalkwijk: My name is Gerbrand Schalkwijk and I am Vice President, Asia-Pacific for Stratos. In my 13 years with Stratos, I've been fortunate to help major maritime operators, broadcasters and governments adopt new mobile satellite systems (MSS) that help improve their productivity and make them more competitive.

Stratos is well known as the leading provider of mobile and fixed-site remote communications solutions to the world's largest companies and militaries.

We supply these organisations with the most advanced, lightweight mobile satellite systems – such as Inmarsat BGAN, FleetBroadband and SwiftBroadband, as well as Iridium and VSAT solutions – for integrated voice and high-speed data connectivity.

What differentiates Stratos is the suite of value-added services that we offer to make these broadband solutions easy to use, efficient to operate and affordable to own. These services – known as The Stratos Advantage – provide users with cost control, firewall management, full traffic information, pre-paid facilities, high security options, easy VPN access, messaging services and full IP range.

Question: Which mobile broadband solutions are in highest demand by Asian maritime operators?

Gerbrand Schalkwijk: Since its introduction in late 2007, we've seen very strong demand for Inmarsat's FleetBroadband service from ship owners and ship managers who are constantly searching for faster, more reliable and more economical communications. Fleet Broadband provides cost-effective, high-speed data and voice communications – for both primary and backup connectivity – at speeds up to 432 kbps, regardless of the vessel's location.

FleetBroadband already has been deployed worldwide on more than 10,000 vessels of all types, for major Asian shipping



Gerbrand Schalkwijk.

companies such as Hong Kong's Wallem Shipmanagement, Taiwan's Evergreen Marine Corp., India's Varun Shipping Co. and Malaysia's MISC Berhad. Stratos accounts for more than 4,500 of those activations. Other notable operators deploying FleetBroadband from Stratos include Bernhard Schulte Shipmanagement, Albacora Group and MPC Steamship.

Maritime fleet managers have discovered that FleetBroadband can be rapidly deployed (without delaying the vessel in its regular trade schedule) across an entire fleet and, as a standard IP service, seamlessly integrated with head-office networks.

To further differentiate our FleetBroadband offering from competitors, our field-tested value-added services enable ship managers to attain the highest possible performance and support from FleetBroadband, at the lowest possible cost. To monitor and control costs, the online Stratos Dashboard provides real-time information on the amount of FleetBroadband traffic used for voice and data, and the associated costs.

Recently, there has been a dramatic increase in the importance that ship managers assign to the quality of communications systems they offer to crewmembers. One of the most effective ways to improve shipboard life for seafarers is to provide advanced voice, email and SMS communications systems that are powerful, economical, easy to use, and available away from the bridge. As part of The Stratos Advantage, our AmosConnect Crew solution addresses these pressing requirements.

Combining AmosConnect and ChatCard, two of Stratos' successful maritime services, AmosConnect Crew enables personnel at sea to stay in contact with home via calling, private email and SMS at low-cost rates.

Wallem and MISC Berhad are among the many Asian maritime companies who have successfully deployed AmosConnect Crew.

Finally, more ship owners are insisting their vessels be fully utilised as offices and streamlined business units. The only way to meet these challenges is with a unified technological solution that seamlessly and cost-effectively integrates all maritime operations on land and at sea. Stratos works with application partners to deliver broadband business solutions that include voyage management, remote management, IT management and cargo management – which help reduce fuel and operations costs and improve crew and customer satisfaction.

Stratos also provides many of the region's largest naval forces with commercial MSS solutions to manage their daily operations at sea. Those systems include Inmarsat B and Inmarsat Fleet leases, as well as full FleetBroadband deployments.

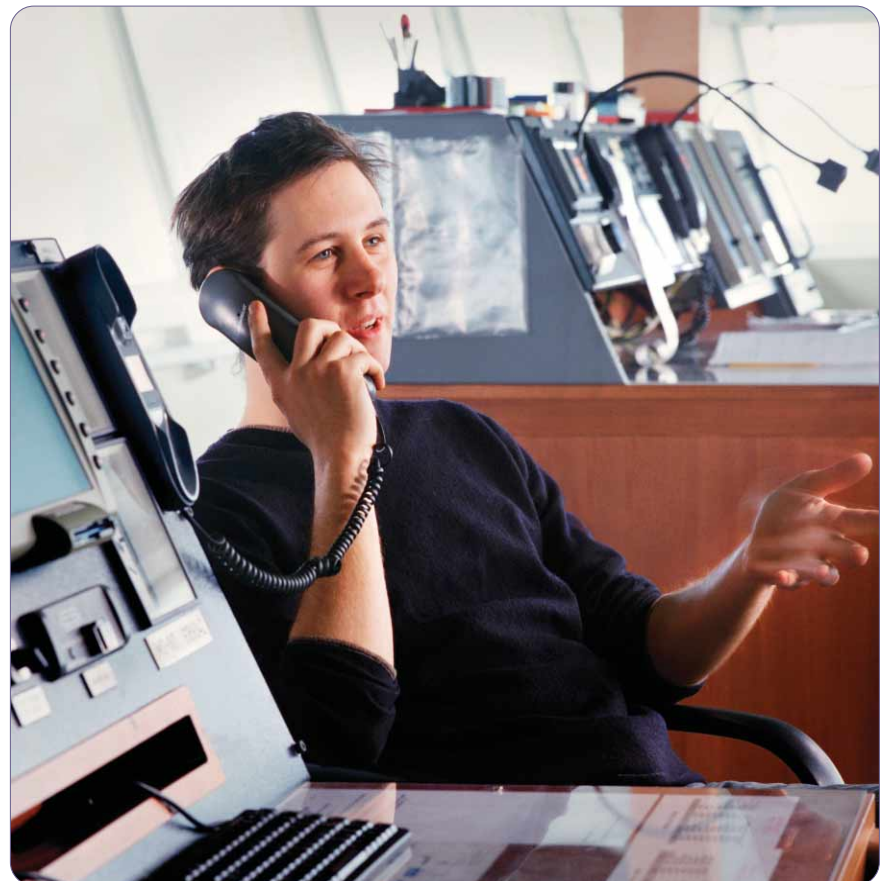
Question: Which land-mobile satcom systems are in highest demand by Asian broadcasters and governments?

Gerbrand Schalkwijk: On the land-mobile side, we've seen very impressive adoption of Inmarsat's BGAN mobile broadband satellite service by some of Asia's largest news organisations. Worldwide, more than 30,000

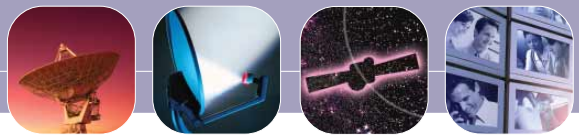
BGAN units have been deployed – over 12,500 of those by Stratos. BGAN provides small, lightweight terminals for voice, high-speed data (up to 492 kbps) and video communications.

The service is ideal for broadcasters – local, national, regional and global – who need dependable, secure voice and broadband access in locations with an unreliable or non-existent telecommunications infrastructure. Leading global broadcasters such as Fuji TV, the BBC, Fox News and Al Jazeera have been successfully deploying BGAN from Stratos for more than two years.

The Stratos Advantage services – featuring Stratos Dashboard – enable broadcasters to monitor airtime, restrict unauthorised usage and manage costs. Broadcasters using BGAN from Stratos also achieve guaranteed, end-to-end bandwidth for their live broadcasts as well as time-critical data by using Stratos GuaranteedAccess, which extends guaranteed bandwidth from the BGAN terminal through to the terrestrial infrastructure to the broadcast centres. Stratos GuaranteedAccess is enabled by StratosNexus, a Stratos managed Global Core network for traditional and IP-based services. Government first responders also represent one of BGAN's largest markets. One excellent example is our provision of



Crew Calling from Stratos.



BGAN to one of Asia's largest national police agencies for communications-on-the-move applications, including broadcasting real-time video of emergency situations and natural disasters to police headquarters.

Question: How do leading MSS distributors differentiate themselves in the minds of Asian customers?

Gerbrand Schalkwijk: It all comes down to the ability to provide consistently superior local support combined with global solutions. We've built strong market share by featuring a long-serving team of experienced professionals in Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan, India and Australia – supplemented by the industry's most extensive network of Channel Partners and agents. We also are receiving strong customer acceptance to the Tokyo-based JSAT MOBILE joint venture that we formed in 2008. All of our sales and support experts understand the cultural nuances of each unique Asian market, and they are trained to provide rapid response in the local language.

In this challenging economic climate, first-time customers appreciate the fact that we offer equipment/airtime bundles for one low monthly payment, with no activation fees and no capital investment. Maritime users also like the fact that we provide on-board support throughout the region and the world

with a combination of our own staff and a strong partner network. We also have become adept at meeting customer demand for a single-source solution that includes installation and comprehensive support.

Question: Looking ahead, what new maritime MSS developments can we expect to see in the near future?

Gerbrand Schalkwijk: Ship managers in Asia and other regions constantly are seeking new ways to use the full Internet potential of Inmarsat FleetBroadband and Iridium OpenPort broadband services in a controlled environment. That's why we expect to see strong market acceptance for our just-announced AmosConnect Crew CommCenter, the latest version of our popular crew-communications solution. The Internet functionality of this new software version expands beyond email to include true onboard Internet café features, such as web browsing, chatting and access to global news services. We also expect to see broader market acceptance and deployment of onboard GSM services such as the BOW GSM Service from Stratos.

Question: How about expected developments in the land-mobile sector?

Gerbrand Schalkwijk: On the land-mobile side, one of our greatest challenges is to

continue meeting strong demand from the region's major military organisations. The critical need to make high bandwidth available to the individual soldier is growing at such a fast pace that military systems simply cannot keep up with it. Commercial satcom systems are seen as must-have. We will continue providing bundled solutions that provide global coverage, security and flexibility – such as space-segment portability – to meet the changing operational needs of the military. For remote workers in the media, first-responder and maritime communities, we also expect to see healthy future demand for the IsatPhone Pro, which will become commercially available in June. We recently received advance orders for more than 2,000 of the IsatPhone Pro, which is the first model in the Inmarsat GSPS family.

Question: What are Stratos' business objectives in the Asian MSS market in the coming years?

Gerbrand Schalkwijk: Our goal is to continue providing the best solutions and the highest level of support for existing Asian customers from our dedicated, local team of experts. We also will continue working diligently to demonstrate to prospects how our value-added services can help them use the latest MSS solutions to achieve maximum productivity, with minimal cost. ■

